

Message Text

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14

ACTION H-03

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6463

INFO PANCANAL

USCINCSO

UNCLAS PANAMA 0503

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OREP, (WOLFF, LESTER L.) DEA

SUBJECT: CONGRESSMAN WOLFF'S PRESS RELEASE

REFS: A. STATE 15283

B. SAN JOSE 0311

1. EMBASSY SURPRISED AT SEVERAL OF THE ANNOUNCEMENTS IN CONGRESSMAN WOLFF'S PRESS RELEASE. (SEE REF. A) NEITHER WE NOR THE GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA IS AWARE OF ANY "AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE" REACHED BY CONGRESSMEN WOLFF AND GILMAN DURING THEIR VISIT HERE LAST WEEK WHICH WOULD SET UP A "JOINT WORKING COMMISSION" IN PANAMA TO HALT NARCOTICS FLOW FROM THIS PART OF THE WORLD TO THE UNITED STATES. CONGRESSMEN DID INDICATE THEY HAD REACHED AGREEMENT WITH PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA OF MEXICO AND MEXICAN AUTHORITIES FOR SOME FORM OF EXPANDED COOPERATION BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THAT COUNTRY, BUT THAT IS ALL.

2. WE SHARE EMBASSY SAN JOSE'S CONCERN AND CONFUSION, (SEE REF B) OVER WHAT EXACTLY IS MEANT BY PRESS RELEASE STATEMENT THAT "OFFICIALS IN ALL FOUR COUNTRIES VISITED SAID LACK OF STATE DEPARTMENT INITIATIVE IN RESPONDING TO REQUESTS, AND FAILURE TO PROVIDE TIMELY EQUIPMENT AND FULFILL OTHER SUPPORT FUNCTIONS...ETC.".

3. PRESIDENT LAKAS, THE ONLY PANAMANIAN OFFICIAL

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WITH WHOM CODEL WOLFF MET, SAID JUST THE CONTRARY,

AND COMMENDED U.S.-PANAMANIAN COOPERATION IN ATTEMPTING
TO RESOLVE DRUG PROBLEM HERE. HE MAY NO LONGER BE
SO READY TO COMMEND JOINT EFFORTS--OR UNDERTAKE
THEM--AFTER STATEMENTS LIKE THIS ONE.

4. MOREOVER, IT IS ABSURD, AT LEAST AS FAR AS PANAMA
IS CONCERNED, TO SAY THAT "HIGHEST OFFICIALS...
HAVE FOR THE FIRST TIME PUBLICLY PLEDGED ACCEPTANCE
OF A COMMON PROBLEM..." THERE WAS NO "PUBLIC PLEDGE"
IN THIS INSTANCE BUT THERE HAVE BEEN NUMEROUS PAST
PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS OF RECOGNITION OF AND CONCERN
ABOUT DRUG PROBLEM.
JORDEN

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